

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY~~NSS, ARMY reviews
completed - RIFPACOM review
completed by OSDAL-Gen
nu shw
INFORMATION

May 13, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DR. KISSINGER

FROM:

JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE *John*

SUBJECT:

Comments by Fred Ladd on Cambodian
Military Situation and MEDT PersonnelCINCPAC *down*
HK
MORI C05125446 Pgs 2-3,
5-8 = T

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Fred Ladd has sent a message (Tab A) which reviews the current military situation and comments on Defense efforts to increase the number of Military Equipment Delivery Team (MEDT) personnel in Phnom Penh.

Highlights follow:

- There is "exceptional" calm on all fronts, with the enemy's 5th, 7th, and 9th Divisions occupied with the ARVN in the East and elements of the 1st Division pulling away from the Pich Nil Pass (recently reopened by the FANK).
- Ladd is convinced that the enemy is having serious logistical problems, and believes that while the movement of significant supplies and personnel from Laos during the rainy season is possible, the effort would need to be massive and hence detectable.
- There has been some interest on the part of the DOD inspection team over Ladd's alleged "special role" from the President. Ladd was asked for his written directive but denied having one.
- The two most serious FANK deficiencies are training and logistics. Ladd is working for improvements via Sirik Matak and the FANK Chief of Staff, and the MEDT is also working similarly at its own level. Miracles should not be expected, however.
- Ambassador Swank has agreed to an increase of 7 MEDT personnel. Defense has asked for 30 more.

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2.

-- Ladd notes that he and the Ambassador are up against a U. S. military syndrome of wanting to reorganize the FANK according to U. S. standards, which in Ladd's opinion would require a major revamping of the entire Cambodian system requiring a much greater involvement on our part. He believes that this runs contrary to the realities of the FANK and the trend toward a lesser U. S. military involvement in Asia.

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10 May 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brigadier General Alexander M. Haig
Deputy Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

The following message [] from Mr. Ladd
for Brigadier General Haig was received this morning, 10 May 1971.

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"Top Secret Sensitive Exclusively Eyes Only

"To: Brig. Gen. Haig, The White House

"From: Mr. Ladd, Phnom Penh

"1. Phnom Penh and Cambodia remain calm. The enemy has been exceptionally quiet on all fronts and there is considerable speculation in diplomatic circles concerning this inactivity. The 5th, 7th and 9th Divisions appear to be occupied with ARNV in the Chup area and eastward toward Snoul. The elements of the 1st Division apparently have withdrawn from the immediate vicinity of Pich Nil and are somewhere between Route 4 and the Vietnamese border. Although FANK has reopened Route 4 without ground assistance from the ARVN, the operation has not received much attention. Traffic and convoys are moving over Route 4.

"2. I am still convinced the enemy has serious logistical problems and that he is husbanding his resources for the rainy season, just beginning.

"3. Mr. West of the DOD team told me intelligence indicated that the enemy intends to try to move significant supplies and personnel southward from Laos during the rainy season. It is, of course, possible but the effort will have to be massive as the terrain to the north becomes thoroughly inundated. Also, if he does make such a major effort, our intelligence should pick up the actual movement and counter-action can be taken all along the route.

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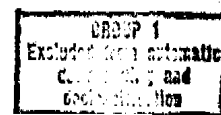
"4. Two members of the DOD team on separate occasions (Colonels Owens and Brady) asked me if they could see my written terms of reference from the President giving me a 'special role' in the Cambodian Assistance Program. I told them that I had no written instructions of any sort from the President but I am not sure they believe me. Brady implied that some part of the JCS was convinced some written directive existed. Owens was also interested in the 'interface' between the Embassy here and MEDTC-CINCPAC-MACV. I told the Ambassador that although I discussed both matters with them openly, I was surprised they asked as neither issue seemed to be a part their own charter. It may have been just curiosity!

"5. I'm sure the DOD team report will bear down hard on training and logistics which are indeed the two most serious problem areas for FANK and are most difficult to resolve in the short term considering all of the associated circumstances. Sirik Matak and Sak Sutsakhan are fully aware of these two major deficiencies and I am working through them to accelerate positive action from the top. The MEDT forward element is also doing all it can at the level at which it operates.

"6. The Ambassador has agreed to the requirement for seven additional spaces for the forward element of the MEDTC here at Phnom Penh (see Phnom Penh 2154). Of the seven, one is another training officer and four are logistics types. Things will gradually get better in the training and logistical fields, but no one should expect miracles in the immediate future.

"7. The Ambassador and I are constantly involved in mild opposition to what I call the 'American standards -- do it the classic way' syndrome. To most of our military visitors who did not see FANK a year ago and who do not recognize the rather dynamic changes for the better that have taken place in that time frame, the FANK and its methods of operation may seem almost hopeless -- particularly when contrasted with our own complex and sophisticated methods of operation. The general concept and goal of our military associates seems to be to make FANK like us as quickly as possible.

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EYES ONLY

My concept and goal has been to help FANK develop along its own lines as quickly as possible. I believe that my concept takes greatest advantage of the Khmer's most important asset -- the unquestioned will to resist and growing desire to do the job themselves. I, of course, recognize the ultimate advantages of the other concept and admit it could probably be done; but to make it fly, we would have to do the work for the Khmer at almost every level from Ministry of Defense through battalion. It would require a major revamping of their entire system. In the process I am afraid FANK would adopt a 'let them do it' complex creating even greater requirements for involvement on our part.

"8. As I read the tea leaves from here, the trend at home is definitely toward less and less military involvement in Asia. Certainly a much larger and growing military involvement here is not in the cards. Therefore if we are going to continue to assist Cambodia with any prospect of receiving future military assistance funds of the magnitude required, we will have to accept some rather marked adjustments to our normal procedures. I sense that instead of positively seeking way to adjust to this entirely different situation and get the job done, the military is using every regulation and reason it can dredge up to continue normal procedures and to increase the U. S. military personnel commitment in Cambodia (see CINCPAC 090552 May 71 which insists on the stationing of 30 additional military personnel in Cambodia).

"9. I know these comments may sound hard-nosed but they are not, repeat not, presented in that context. I am simply calling the shots as I see them and I sincerely believe storm clouds are gathering on the horizon. You should watch this situation very carefully as CINCPAC is almost fanatically determined to force executive (sic) to the J. T. D. which provides for 93 MEDTC personnel in Cambodia and only 20 in SVN. We were not consulted in the preparation of the J. T. D. nor to my knowledge were there any personnel involved in its preparation who had direct association with the current in-country aspects of the program. Also, I do not believe any significant consideration was or is given to the domestic, political, and statutory aspects which limit our operational commitments in Cambodia.

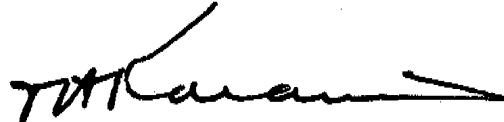
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"10. Mr. Moose was here for three days recently and seemed quite satisfied with our operation. He was principally interested in updating data from his previous visit late in 1970. Best regards.

"Top Secret Sensitive Exclusively Eyes Only"



Thomas H. Karamessines
Deputy Director for Plans

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